

Raised Bill No. 5322: AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A HUMAN SERVICES PERMIT AND A REQUIREMENT THAT SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS CONDUCT HOME VISITS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR:

Education Committee

Submitted By: Lisa Sousa Mooney, Putnam High School, Putnam CT

I would like to first start out by stating I am absolutely **OPPOSED** to the new bill being proposed, **Raised Bill No. 5322**.

I do not believe that School Social Workers should be mandated to make 2 or more home visits a school year for every student on their caseload. How many home visits that are done throughout a school year needs to be decided by the School Social Worker, the Student Support Team as well as Administration. Not all students who are on a SSW's caseload and receive mental health services need home visits. SSW's cannot be out in the community doing this all the time because we have many other responsibilities that need to keep us in the building, providing emotional support, conflict resolution, peer mediation, counseling, and mental health first aid which is our top priority. I am the only SSW at my high school, and I am the first person the front office, administration and the guidance department call to assist with crying students, screaming students, mental health crisis or needing to do a suicidal assessment or threats to harm others assessment, etc. and this **Must** take priority over visiting homes. Home visits need to be done on a case-by-case basis and only when intervention is needed in the home with parent support, especially if parents are not able to come into the school or don't drive. Otherwise, not all students on my caseload need this level of intervention.

Secondly, if schools were to hire bachelor level social workers/human service workers they are not clinically trained to provide mental health support and clinical assessments with students. I would advocate to hire them to address the attendance and truancy problems that many schools face and then the home visiting would

makes a lot more sense if this is the intervention to assist students and parents, basically a truant officer who assists the SSW on getting students into school so they don't miss out on their education and so they can receive mental health support from the SSW or Psychologist. Unfortunately, most SSW's must also monitor and assist with attendance, and this takes so much valuable time away from addressing more student clinical needs and crisis because we can't do it all. The mental health needs of students have risen tremendously over these last couple years and taking us out the building would be detrimental to our students who come to school every day and need our emotional support and counseling to be successful not only in school but in the community as well.

Once again, I am opposed of the new bill being proposed, #5322.

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